

BOYCOTT BANNED!

The ruling class is going all out to make the October Municipal elections a success. A failure on this issue by a high boycott figure may well have serious consequences for the Nationalist Party. It may mean changing strategy by abandoning "reform" and making peace with its hill-billy cousins in the Conservative Party.

For many years now, the political plans of the ruling class have been foiled by a very simple, cost free device – namely the boycott. The boycott is therefore the target of the fury of the government. For the first time in the history of this country, the calling of the political boycott has been made illegal. This means that if you call for a boycott and persuade others to do so, you can get into trouble with the law. But if you decide that you do not agree with what is being offered and therefore will not stand as a candidate or go to vote, you break no law.

We repeat that calling for a boycott of the elections has now been made a crime. Yet the right to reject a proposal by organising a peaceful boycott is a fundamental right recognised all over the democratic world. The boycott does not burn buildings; it does not throw stones; it does not set off bombs. All it does is to demonstrate a rejection of something offered. The boycotter simply says: "I don't agree with this proposal. I will therefore not participate in it." It is of little use ranting and raving at the boycotter. There is no way that a person can be compelled to vote, unless it is at gunpoint. Even then there will be those who would rather face the bullet than the ballot.

The making illegal of a peaceful boycott campaign against the October Elections means that opposition to the elections has been silenced. Yet those who want to take part in the elections can say as much as they want to (which cannot be much) about why people should take part. It brings to mind the case of two boxers in the ring. The one has both his hands tied behind his back. The other has both free hands with knuckle-dusters. That is what you would call fair fight – if you are a P.W. Botha man.

But the people are wise and compassionate. They will always support the underdog. The ruling class is in for a shock – a nasty one. After all they would have caused it.